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Bush Unqualified To Head CIA

AMONG the sweeping changes ordered by President Ford in his sudden shake-up of top-level administration personnel, none is more dubious than the selection of George Bush, U. S. representative to China, as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The inescapable fact is that, as a two-term congressman from Texas and former national Republican chairman, Mr. Bush is a political animal with no background whatever in intelligence gathering and, as such, has no credentials for heading the CIA. One of the obvious problems brought out by the current congressional investigations of past CIA misdeeds is that it became overly involved in political machinations, both domestic and foreign, even under directors who were not primarily politicians as Mr. Bush unquestionably is.

The basic incompatibility of the candidate and the job was trenchantly underlined by Sen. Frank Church of Idaho. In announcing his probable opposition to the Bush appointment, the senator noted that he knew "of no particular reason why he (Mr. Bush) is qualified"

for a post that was "the least political and most sensitive in government."

Mr. Bush, by his own description in 1973 after a two-year stint as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, was "enamored of elective politics" and admitted to little experience or interest in foreign affairs. And his U.N. tenure and his subsequent cloistered year in the U. S. liaison office in Peking can hardly be regarded as having corrected that deficiency to the point where he is prepared to direct the nation's vital foreign intelligence apparatus.

Whatever Mr. Ford's reason might be for firing CIA Director William Colby — and the best speculation is that the agency chief is being made a scapegoat for CIA activities that took place well before he became director — there is no credible rationale for replacing him with someone of Mr. Bush's stripe. Indeed, there is every reason for the Senate to reject the appointment when it comes before that body for confirmation. It will be difficult enough to keep the agency within its legislative bounds and free from political taint in the future, even under the best of leadership.